

HF Happenings



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the week of 14 December 2015

Christmas Greetings

The HF Happenings team, Carina and I and our dog Rambo, wish you and your family a very Blessed Christmas and may the birth of Jesus Christ be centre in your Christmas time.

ZS9YOTA and the ZS6ZU Hammies

The ZS6ZU Hammies Amateur Radio Club will be participating in the December IARU Youngsters on the Air event next weekend, 19 and 20 December operating as ZS9YOTA from the National Amateur Radio Centre (NARC) at Sentech in Octave Road, Radiokop from 12:00 on Saturday to 12:00 Sunday. Starting time is from 10:00 for the introduction to digital modes and station set up.



If you are under the age of 25, you are cordially invited to participate in this event. We will be operating two stations non-stop for 24 hours. One station will be working on 10, 15, 20 meters and the other on 40 and 80 meters. You do not have to be a licensed operator to join in the fun. You will be working under an experienced licensed operator who will be there to guide you all the way.

We will be sleeping over at NARC, so if you want to stay over for the 24 hours, you are responsible for your own food, sleeping gear, toiletries, change of clothes, cutlery, mugs and snacks as well as a torch.

The club braai master Graham, ZS6GL, will be attending to the fire early Saturday evening. Refreshments will be provided. Dinner is hamburgers and breakfast

will be cereal and muffins. To help cover costs, a small donation will be welcome.

If you are going to join in and will be staying overnight, then please contact Noel, ZR6DX, on 082 490 9934, Graham, ZS6GL, on 083 442 7777 or send an e-mail to zr6dx@iafrica.com

German amateurs push for higher 5 MHz power

The DARC reports the RTA, a coalition of most of the German Amateur Radio Clubs, is pushing for 100 watts output in the new WRC-15 60 m allocation

The General Assembly of the World Radio Conference in 2015 in Geneva (WRC-2015) set a maximum effective radiated power in the region of 15 watts EIRP.

However, as some countries already deviate from this limitation, the RTA hopes that Germany can have a higher power of 100 W PEP, the same level Dutch radio amateurs have had since 3 December.

The Netherlands Opens 100 kHz Band at 5 MHz

Just days after delegates to World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC-15) reached consensus on a new global 15 kHz-wide allocation at 5 MHz, the Netherlands opened a 100 kHz band for Amateur Radio use. Article 4.4 of the ITU *Radio Regulations* lets countries authorise frequency assignments that are contrary to the international *Table of Allocations*, but only on a non-interference, non-protected basis.

Amateurs in the Netherlands have been authorized to use 5 350 to 5 450 MHz at up to 100 W PEP. The Netherlands' IARU member society VERON has recommended the use of USB.



WRC-15 laid the foundation for a global, secondary Amateur Radio allocation of 5 351,5 kHz to 5 366,5 kHz at up to 15 W effective isotropic radiated power.

The new worldwide band will not be available for use until ICASA institutes the Final Acts of WRC-15.

INDEXA Newsletter

The Fall 2015 Special Edition of the International DX Association's (INDEXA) Newsletter is now available for download at www.indexa.org/newsletters.html. This issue includes a report of LZ1GC's recent DXpedition to Nauru (C21GC) and an article by K9LA on "Disappearing Sunspots".

Iron Ham WW Contest

(The Araucaria DX Group [ADXG])

Oms, PY5EG, reports, "Due the high congestion of contests during all the year long, we did not find a date for our Iron Ham Contest. We are studying the possibility to co-organize a three-mode contest with some other entity around the world and then establish a convenient date for it. Therefore, this year we are not going to have our Iron Ham Contest. I express our best thanks for the support us in our previous edition."

K5P Palmyra DXpedition News

(Press Release #5, dated 7 December)

Palmyra 2016 Update! In about a month, the Palmyra Team will be assembling in Hawaii on the first leg of their journey to Palmyra and our excitement is growing!

Palmyra ranks in the top ten of the Most Wanted List and #2 in Europe! As with major DXpeditions, there has been a change of plans due to unforeseen events. Based on the original award received in January 2015, a team of 12 operators was assembled.

Our host, The Nature Conservancy, as part of the award, provides the air charter. Earlier this year, the airstrip was de-certified and as a result, the aircraft type had to be changed to allow access to the Palmyra. The aircraft selected will only seat

December

- 1 – Start of Youth on the Air (YOTA) month
- 3 – Day for Disabled Persons
- 5 -Stargazing picnic at the Taal Monument, Paarl; Modderfontein Christmas Night Market, JHB
- 5 and 6 – UK/EI DX SSB Contest
- 6 – SARL Digital Contest
- 9 – All schools close
- 12 and 13 – ARRL 10 metre contest; Gabrielskloof Favourite Things Market, Bot River
- 15 to 19 – KZN Christmas Market Festival, Hillcrest
- 16 – Day of Reconciliation; Shongweni Farmers Market, Durban
- 17 and 18 - Christmas Market, Mossel Bay
- 22 - Summer Solstice; Feast of Tevet
- 24 – Christmas Eve
- 25 - Christmas Day
- 26 – Family Day
- 27 – Groote Post Country Market, Darling
- 31 - Old Years Eve; end of 2015 CQ Marathon; end of Youth on the Air (YOTA) Month
- 31 – Destroy your copy of the 2015 SARL Blue Book

January 2016

- 1 – Download your copy of the 2016 SARL Blue Book
- 1 – New Years day; start of the 2016 CQ Marathon
- 9 and 10 – Hunting Lions in the Air
- 13 – All schools open
- 15 to 17 –PEARS VHF/UHF Contest
- 23 – Summer QRP Contest
- 23 and 24 - UK/EI DX CW Contest
- 28 to 31 – Up the Creek Music Festival, Swellendam
- 31– Groote Post Country Market, Darling

nine persons, which is a major change of plans for the DXpedition.

Several alternate options were examined but were unsuccessful. It was with great pain that three of the operators stepped back from the Team to allow the DXpedition to proceed.

All equipment has been received, being pretested and packaged for shipment to Hawaii. The Team plans on leaving Hawaii for Palmyra on 11 January 2016 and being active from 12 to 25 January.

Future Palmyra Atoll activations may not happen for many years, as access is severely restricted. Permissions to operate on these rare and extremely controlled locations are very difficult to obtain. We wish to thank The Nature Conservancy and the US

Fish and Wildlife Service for their cooperation and support. Without this, K5P Palmyra 2016 would not occur.

Check the K5P Palmyra 2016 web page for future updates, propagation predictions and donation page.

<http://palmyra2016.org/>

73, Lou N2TU, and Craig, K9CT

2015 CQ WW Survey Results

The CQ WW Contest Committee conducted a survey of contesters from 2 to 29 September 2015. Invitations were sent to everyone who had submitted a log in the 2014 CQ WW SSB and CW events. Public invitation to take the survey was also made on the cq-contest email reflector.

We received 5 117 responses from contest operators around the world (after removing a few duplicate responses). This blog post will be the first of several to present the survey results. Thanks to Doug KR2Q for doing the data analysis and producing the charts.

<http://cqww.com/blog/2015-cq-ww-survey-results-part-1/>

GK Prefix in Cornwall

Amateurs permanently located in Cornwall and on the Scilly Islands are permitted to use the letter K as part of their prefix (G3ABC would become GK3ABC, 2E0ABC would become 2KOABC) during 2016 in order to mark the official recognition of the Cornish as a national minority. There will also be an award available, visit

<http://gb2gm.org/>



African DX



Namibia, V5. Dietmar, DL3DXX, will once again be active as V5/DL3DXX from Namibia between 17 and 28 December. He will operate mostly CW with a focus on the low bands. QSL via home call, preferably through Club Log's OQRS.

Botswana, A2. Gopan, MOXUU/VU3HPF, will be holidaying in Kasane and Gaborone from 22 to 30 December. He is active holiday-style as A25GR on 40, 30, 20 and 17 m on CW and SSB, running 100 W and a Windom antenna. QSL via MOXUU, direct or the bureau.

African Islands

IOTA frequencies

CW: 28 040 24 920 21 040 18 098 14 040 10 114 7 030 3 530 kHz

SSB: 28 560 28 460 24 950 21 260 18 128 14 260 7 055 3 760 kHz

Reunion Island FR. Mario, FR4QT, will be active again on 19, 20 December and 26 December with the call TO90R for the 90th anniversary of REF. QSL via FR4QT, direct.

Canary Islands, EA8. Erich, HB9FIH, is going to be active from El Hierro AF-004 between 16 December and 10 March as EA8/HB9FIH on 80 to 10 m using CW, RTTY, PSK and some SSB. He also plans to visit Malpaso (SOTA EA8/HI-001) during that time and operate as EA8/HB9FIH/p, running a QRP rig on 40, 30, and 20 m CW. QSL via HB9FIH, direct, bureau, eQSL and LoTW.

Reunion Island, FR: Stephane, F5UOW, plans to get on the air during his spare time from Reunion AF-016 between 16 December and 8 January signing FR/F5UOW on 40 to 10 m CW and digital modes. QSL via F5UOW, LoTW.

Kerguelen Islands, FT4X (Update). Nicolas, F4EGX, is now active as FT4XU from a scientific mission at Ratmanoff, 30 km north-east of Port-aux-Français, on Kerguelen Island for a few days (until 15 December).

However, he will be back and his operation will possibly end maybe in the middle of January 2016. Activity was heard on 20 metres SSB around 14 128 kHz between 16:30 and 17:30 UTC. He states that he is using a "FT-857, 50 W and a dipole antenna which can only be installed at human height, battery powered." There will be no PC for logging, only paper log. Logs will not be uploaded and there is no internet connection. Their camp has no electricity. QSL via F1ULQ.

Crozet and Kerguelen Islands, FT. Gildas, TU5KG has left on a new fishing campaign in the Southern Indian Ocean. Usually he is active as /mm when in the Crozet, FT5WQ, and Kerguelen, FT5XT, waters, but "for a period of time in early 2016 he will be on Kerguelen Island." QSL via F4DXW, direct only.

Mauritius, 3B8. Eric, OE4AAC, will be active as 3B8HD from Flic-en-Flac, Mauritius (AF-049), between 11 February and 1 March 2016. Activity will be holiday style, mostly on CW and on 40 to 10 metres using a Kenwood TS-480HX with a Smartuner SG-230 into a Wire Trap Vertical for 30/40 m, and elevated radials. QSL via OE4AAC, by the OE-Bureau or direct. (Please include SAE, 1 GS for Europe, 2 GS for Overseas. Valid IRC also welcome). Log will be uploaded to OQRS.

History this week

(The week starting 14 December)

1287 - The Zuiderzee Sea Wall in the Netherlands breaks and the floods kill 50 000 people

1538 - Pope Paul III excommunicated King Henry VIII after he had declared himself supreme head of the Church in England

1770 - Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827) was born in Bonn, Germany on 16 December

1861 - Prince Albert died of typhoid at Windsor Castle. He was the consort and husband of Queen Victoria of England

1901 - New Zealand offers an additional 1 000 soldiers for service in the Anglo Boer War

1911 - Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole

1962 - The Mariner II space probe sent back information from the planet Venus, the first information ever received from another planet

1995 - European Union leaders announced their new currency would be known as the Euro

2001 - The Fellowship of the Ring is released in movie theatres (19 Dec)

2002 - The Two Towers is released in movie theatres (18 Dec)

2003 - The Return of the King is released in movie theatres (17 Dec)



Contest Calendar

This week's contests as compiled by Bruce Horn, WA7BNM. The period covered is 14 to 21 December 2015

QRP Fox Hunt

02:00 - 03:30 UTC 16 December

Mode: CW

Bands: 40 m Only

Classes: Single Op - fox or hound

Max power: 5 watts

Exchange: RST, state, province or country, name and power output
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO
Multipliers: (none)
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points
Submit logs by: 03:30 UTC 17 December 2015
E-mail logs to: (see rules)
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at:
http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org/winter_rules.htm

Phone Fray
02:30 - 03:00 UTC 16 December
Mode: SSB
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 m
Classes: Single Op
Max power: 100 watts
Exchange: NA: Name and state, province or country; non-NA: Name
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: NA station: 1 point per QSO; non-NA station: 1 point per QSO with an NA station
Multipliers: Each US state (including KH6/KL7) once per band; Each VE province/territory once per band; Each North American country (except W/VE) once per band
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by: 03:00 UTC 18 December 2015
E-mail logs to: (none)
Post log summary at:
<http://www.3830scores.com>
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at:
http://www.perluma.com/Phone_Fray_Content_Rules.pdf

CWops Mini-CWT Test
13:00 - 14:00 UTC and 19:00 - 20:00 UTC 16 December and 03:00 - 04:00 UTC 17 December
Mode: CW
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m
Classes: Single Op - QRP, low or high

Max power: HP: >100 watts; LP: 100 watts; QRP: 5 watts
Exchange: Member: Name and member no; non-Member: Name and state, province or country
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO
Multipliers: Each call once
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by: 04:00 UTC 19 December 2015
Post log summary at:
<http://www.3830scores.com>
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at:
<http://www.cwops.org/cwt.html>



NAQCC CW Sprint
01:30 - 03:30 UTC 17 December
Mode: CW
Bands: 80, 40, 20 m
Classes: (none)
Max power: <1 watt
Exchange: RST, state, province or country and NAQCC no or power
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO with non-member; 2 points per QSO with member
Multipliers: Each state, province or country once
Key Type Mult: 2 x if straight key, 1.5 x if bug, 1 x if other
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults x key type mult
Submit logs by: 2359Z December 20, 2015
Upload log at:
<http://naqcc.info/sprintlog.html>
Mail logs to: John Shannon, K3WWP, 478 E. High St., Kittanning, PA 16201, USA
Find rules at:

<http://naqcc.info/sprint201512.html>

NCCC RTTY Sprint

01:45 - 02:15 UTC 18 December

Mode: RTTY

Bands: (see rules)

Classes: (none)

Exchange: Serial no, name and QTH

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 20 December 2015

E-mail logs to: (none)

Post log summary at:

<http://www.3830scores.com/>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<http://www.ncccsprint.com/rtty.html>

QRP Fox Hunt

02:00 - 03:30 UTC 18 December

Mode: CW

Bands: 80 m Only

Classes: Single Op - fox or hound

Max power: 5 watts

Exchange: RST, state, province or country, name and power output

QSO Points: 1 point per QSO

Multipliers: (none)

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points

Submit logs by: 03:30 UTC 19 December 2015

E-mail logs to: (see rules)

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org/winter_rules.htm

NCCC Sprint

02:30 - 03:00 UTC 18 December

Mode: (see rules)

Bands: (see rules)

Classes: (none)

Exchange: Serial no, name and QTH

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 20 December 2015

E-mail logs to: (none)

Post log summary at:

<http://www.3830scores.com/>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<http://www.ncccsprint.com/rules.html>

Russian 160-Meter Contest

20:00 - 24:00 UTC 18 December

Mode: CW, SSB

Bands: 160 m Only

Classes: Single Op; Multi-Op

Exchange: Rus: RS(T) and Oblast code; non-Rus: RS(T) and serial no

Work stations: Once per mode

QSO Points: (see rules)

Multipliers: Each DXCC entity once; Each Oblast once

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 2 January 2016

E-mail logs to: contest@radio.ru

Upload log at:

<http://ua9qcq.com/contests/robot.php>

Mail logs to: Radio Magazine, 10 Seliverstov per., 107045 Moscow, Russia

Find rules at:

<http://www.grz.ru/contest/detail/90.html>

AGB-Party Contest

21:00 - 24:00 UTC 18 December

Mode: CW, SSB, Digital

Bands: 80 m Only

Classes: Single Op - CW, SSB or mixed; Multi-Op; Digital; 1 Hour; SWL

Exchange: AGB Member: RST, QSO no and member no; non-Member: RST and QSO no

Work stations: Once per mode per 15-minute period (see rules)

QSO Points: 1 point per QSO with same continent; 3 points per QSO with different continent

Multipliers: Each AGB member once; Each DXCC/WAE country once

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 15 January 2016

E-mail logs to: eu1eu@mail.ru

Mail logs to: Igor "Harry" Getmann, EU1EU, PO Box 143, Minsk 220005, Belarus

Find rules at:

http://www.ev5agb.com/contest/agb_party.htm

Feld Hell Sprint

00:00 - 23:59 UTC 19 December

Mode: Feld Hell

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 15, 10, 6 m

Classes: (none)

Max power: Standard: 100 watts; QRP: 5 watts

Exchange: (see rules)

Work stations: Once per band

QSO Points: (see rules)

Bonus Points: (see rules)

Multipliers: (see rules)

Score Calculation: (see rules)

Submit logs by: 26 December 2015

Upload log at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/feldhellclub/>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/feldhellclub/Home/contests/sprints/Happy-Birthday-Rudolph-Sprint>



OK DX RTTY Contest

00:00 - 24:00 UTC 19 December

Mode: RTTY

Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m

Classes: Single Op All Band - low or high; Single Op Single Band; Multi-Op; SWL

Max operating hours: 24 hours

Max power: HP: >100 watts; LP: 100 watts

Exchange: RST and CQ Zone

QSO Points: 10 - 20 m: 1 point same continent, 2 points different continent; 40 - 80 m: 3 points same continent, 6 points different continent

Multipliers: DXCC Countries, once per band; OK stations, once per band

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x (DXCC mults and OK mults)

Submit logs by: 2 January 2016

Upload log at:

<http://okratty.crk.cz/index.php?page=send-log>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<http://okratty.crk.cz/index.php?page=english>

RAC Winter Contest

00:00 - 23:59 UTC 19 December

Mode: CW, Phone

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2 m

Classes: Single Op All Band - QRP, low or high; Single Op CW; Single Op Phone; Single Op Single Band; Multi-Single - low or high; Multi-Multi

Max operating hours: 24 hours

Max power: HP: >100 watts; LP: 100 watts;

QRP: 5 watts

Exchange: VE: RS(T) and province or territory; non-VE and VE0: RS(T) and serial no

QSO Points: VE/VE0: 10 points; non-VE/VE0: 2 points; RAC official stations: 20 points

Multipliers: VE provinces and territories (13), once per mode per band

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 31 January 2016

E-mail logs to: canadawinter@rac.ca

Mail logs to: Radio Amateurs of Canada, 720 Belfast Road, Suite 217, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 0Z5, Canada

Find rules at:

<http://wp.rac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015-Winter-Contest-Rules-English-French.pdf>

Croatian CW Contest

14:00 UTC 19 December to 14:00 UTC, Dec 20

Mode: CW

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m

Classes: Single Op All Band (QRP/Low/High); Single Op Single Band (Low/High); Multi-Single

Max operating hours: 24 hours

Max power: HP: 100 or more watts; LP: <100 watts; QRP: 5 watts

Exchange: RST and serial no

QSO Points: Own continent: 2 points 40 - 160 m, 1 point 10 - 20 m; Other continents: 6

points 40 - 160 m, 3 points 10 - 20 m; 9A stations: 10 points 40 - 160 m, 6 points 10 - 20 m

Multipliers: DXCC/WAE Countries, once per band

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 19 January 2016

Upload log at:

<http://www.hamradio.hr/hfrobot>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<http://9acw.org/index.php/rules/english/106-rules-2015>

ARRL Rookie CW Roundup

18:00 - 23:59 UTC 20 December

Mode: CW

Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 m

Classes: Single Op Rookie; Multi-Op Rookie; Non-Rookies

Max power: 100 watts

Exchange: NA: Name, 2-digit year first licensed and state, province, XE area or DX

Work stations: Once per band

QSO Points: 1 point per QSO with non-rookie; 2 points per QSO with rookie

Multipliers: Each US state and DC once; Each VE province once; Each XE call area once; One DX once

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 23:59 UTC 23 December 2015

E-mail logs to: (none)

Post log summary at:

http://www.b4h.net/arrlrr/rr_scoresubmission.php

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at:

<http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>

Run for the Bacon QRP Contest

02:00 - 04:00 UTC 21 December

Mode: CW

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m

Classes: Single Band; All Band

Max power: 5 watts

Exchange: RST, state, province or country and member no or power

Work stations: Once per band

QSO Points: 1 point per QSO with non-member; 3 points per QSO with member on same continent; 5 points per QSO with member on different continent

Multipliers: Each state, province or country once; Multiply mults by 2 if >50 members worked

Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults

Submit logs by: 27 December 2015

E-mail logs to: (none)

Upload log at:

<http://fpgrp.org/pigrun/autolog.php>

Mail logs to: (none)

Find rules at: <http://fpgrp.org/pigrun/>

Next Week's Contest

SKCC Sprint, 00:00 - 02:00 UTC 23 December

Phone Fray, 02:30 - 03:00 UTC 23 December

CWops Mini-CWT Test, 13:00 - 14:00 UTC and 19:00 - 20:00 UTC 23 December and 03:00 - 04:00 UTC 24 December

NCCC RTTY Sprint, 01:45 - 02:15 UTC 25 December

NCCC Sprint, 02:30 - 03:00 UTC 25 December

DARC Christmas Contest, 08:30 - 10:59 UTC 26 December

Stew Perry Topband Challenge, 15:00 UTC 26 December to 15:00 UTC 27 December

RAEM Contest, 00:00 - 11:59 UTC 27 December



Club Score Processor

N3FJP's log scoring programs have had the ability to post score updates to a web page - Now he has added Club Score

Processor 1.0, with the ability to scrape those score pages, aggregate them, and re-post a summary of that information for use by groups or clubs.

<http://www.n3fjp.com/clubscore.html>

Word to the Wise - RST (Readability, Strength, Tone)

In contesting use, the RST signal report is more of a placeholder, or merely an indicator that something important that should be logged is coming next. Though exchanged in most contests, it is nearly universally disregarded during the log scoring process.

For CW contests, despite RST's numeric irrelevance for logging, the last number and two potential suffixes ARE important to pay attention to if you receive them. If you receive a "T" (third number) of anything other than "9," you should definitely check your signal. It could indicate that you have arcing in your tube final amplifier, or perhaps a power supply that is just on the edge of being able to supply your rig. Alternatively, perhaps your boat anchor's electrolytic capacitors require reformation or replacement.

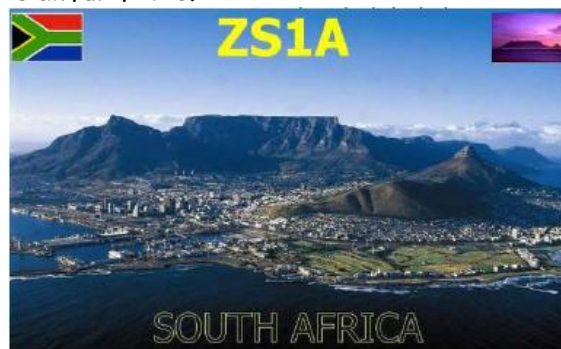
RST followed by "K" indicates that you are perceived to have key clicks on your signal. Perhaps your modern solid-state rig's keying waveform rise time is too sharp. Maybe you are hot switching an amplifier. On a crowded band, you are not going to be a popular person, as you are interfering with others on the band (and potentially outside of it). That is a lot of energy you could be putting into your carrier.

RST followed by "C" indicates that your signal is perceived to have a chirp (carrier frequency instability). Something is causing your carrier frequency to shift during transmission. With modern radios, it is quite infrequent; during boat-anchor contests, or straight-key night when the tube radios come out to play, it is the sound of nostalgia.

In a phone contest, you are usually going to get a 59 RS report and direct com-

ments regarding your signal if it is awful enough. Typical negative reports could include "Too much compression," "RF on your audio," or "lots of blower noise."

Remember the old adage - only 1 in 73 contacts will actually tell you your signal is awful if it is.



RS-232 to USB

It appears that more and more ham gear is shifting away from built-in RS-232 serial interfaces to embrace USB standards. My Icom 7410 conveniently has a single USB, which handles the CAT interface as well as audio; my Elecraft K3 is upgradable to a built-in USB interface just like the newer K3S. The first USB specification was released in 1995 and achieved broad acceptance with v1.1 in 1998. Since then, USB 2.0 (2000) and USB 3.0 (2008) have brought significant improvements in speeds.

USB-C provides an upgrade in functionality, complexity, and capability, but sacrifices direct hardware compatibility http://www.eetimes.com/document.asp?doc_id=1327449. The biggest anticipated consumer-benefit for USB-C is the potential to transfer up to 100 watts (!) of power between devices - the direction is negotiable by the devices. Something I am looking forward to is USB-C's potential to consolidate the number of cables required to handle today's video, power, network, keyboard, mouse, serial, etc. especially for portable or 'dxpeditionary' use. Plugable.com already has some USB-C capable docking stations <http://plugable.com/products/ud-3900>.

SAQ to carry on the Tradition of Christmas Eve VLF Transmissions

Alexanderson alternator transmitter station SAQ at the World Heritage Grimeton site in Sweden will continue a holiday tradition begun 10 years ago when it takes to the airwaves on Christmas Eve, 24 December. There will be a CW transmission from the Alexanderson alternator on 17,2 kHz from Grimeton Radio/SAQ at 08:00 UTC on 24 December, with transmitter tune-up starting at 07:30 UTC. Amateur Radio station SK6SAQ will not be active this year, because the radio room is being refurbished. The Alexanderson Association website has information on how to receive the VLF signal. <http://alexander.n.se/the-radio-station-saq-grimeton/lyssna-pa-saq/?lang=en>

SAQ accepts listener reports via e-mail info@alexander.n.se, direct mail to Alexander-Grimeton Veteranradios Vaenner, Radiostationen Grimeton 72 SE-432 98 Grimeton, Sweden. The radio station will be open to visitors.

The vintage SAQ Alexanderson alternator, dating from the 1920s, is essentially an ac alternator run at extremely high speed <http://alexander.n.se/>. It can put out 200 kW, but typically is operated at less than one-half that power level. Once providing reliable transatlantic communication, it is now a museum piece and only put on the air for special occasions. Swedish engineer and radio pioneer Ernst Alexanderson developed the transmitter.

Six 400+ foot towers with 150 foot cross arms support a multi-wire antenna for SAQ. The actual signal radiates from a vertical wire, one from each tower.

Thanks to Lars Kalland, SM6NM



Fessenden Christmas Eve Commemorative Transmissions Set

Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, will again put his 600-metre Experimental Station WG2XFQ on the air on for a Christmas Eve commemorative transmission. WG2XFQ will transmit on 486 kHz from Forest, Virginia, to mark the 109th anniversary of Reginald Fessenden's first audio transmission.

Historic accounts say Fessenden played the violin - or a recording - and read a brief Bible verse. It has been reported that other radio experimenters and shipboard operators who heard Fessenden's broadcast were astounded.



Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, built this replica circa-1920 transmitter, capable of CW and Heising modulated AM. [Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, photo]

Justin will conduct a run-up to this year's event starting at around mid-day Eastern Time on 23 December. The "official" Christmas event will begin on 24 December at 00:01 UTC (the evening of December 23 in US time zones) and will continue for at least 24 hours. Justin said he plans to repeat the commemorative transmissions on New Year's Eve and on New Year's Day.

Fessenden's transmitter was an ac alternator, modulated by placing carbon microphones in series with the antenna feed line. Justin's homebuilt station is slightly more modern, based on a 1921 vacuum tube master oscillator power amplifier (MOPA) design. Listener reports are appreciated and may be sent directly to Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, at his QRZ.com address.

CW Skimmer Developer Alex Shovkopyas, VE3NEA, Receives RAC Radio Amateur of the Year Plaque

Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) honoured *CW Skimmer* developer Alex Shovkopyas, VE3NEA, as its 2014 Radio Amateur of the Year, and he received the plaque on October 31 at the annual York Region Hamfest near Toronto.



Presenting Shovkopyas with the plaque was the new RAC Ontario South Director Phil McBride, VA3QR. The plaque cites Schovkopyas for "outstanding and consistent contribution to the welfare of Amateur Radio." A contesting tool, *CW Skimmer* interprets call signs sent in CW over a wide receiver bandwidth and identifies waterfall traces by call sign. The extracted call signs then are exported as DX spots.

He has also developed other free software packages for Amateur Radio; including the propagation tool *Ham Cap*
<http://www.dxatlas.com/hamcap/>.
<http://www.dxatlas.com/CwSkimmer/>

Confused Coax

For figuring out which coax is which in a large bundle (or for bundled and jumbled conductors in general), add a telephone tone generator to your bag of tools

<https://www.google.com/search?q=telephone+tone+generator+and+probe&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8>

Keyboards

If you enjoy the feel and clack-clack-clack noise of a mechanical switch computer keyboard, you might find the ability to construct your own appealing
[https://www.massdrop.com/buy/the-whitefox-key-](https://www.massdrop.com/buy/the-whitefox-key-board?referer=YCHY68&mode=guest_open&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Uncategorized%20A%20Product)

[board?referer=YCHY68&mode=guest_open&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Uncategorized%20A%20Product](https://www.massdrop.com/buy/the-whitefox-key-board?referer=YCHY68&mode=guest_open&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Uncategorized%20A%20Product)

[t%20Announcement%202015-12-11&utm_term=Community%20-%20Uncategorized%20-%20%5BA%5D](http://www.usbtypewriter.com/)

For a really retro experience, use a real vintage typewriter for your keyboard needs

<http://www.usbtypewriter.com/>

Items used with acknowledgement to the ARRL Letter, the ARRL DX News, the ARRL Contest Update, OPDX Bulletin, 425 DX Bulletin, DXNL Newsletter, WIA-News, the RSGB News, DxCoffee, Southgate ARC News, DX World and the Amateur Radio Newsletter

